of the Estonian recruits to the Army were able to read and write. 872
A temporary setback followed the decree of 1887 forbidding the use of the Estonian language in schools, but conditions improved after the 1905 Revolution. After the establishment of their independence, both Estonia and Latvia introduced compulsory education, and in Latvia the school-leaving age is now 16 years. There is, therefore, [212] ●
practically no illiteracy—only 3·9 per cent. of the population of Estonia were registered as illiterate in the census of 1934, and the Russian minority accounted for the greater part of these—and the standard of instruction is said to compare favourably with that of other Western countries. There are flourishing universities at Tartu in Estonia, and in Riga.

Lithuania was, by contrast, far less advanced in educational development at the time when she achieved independence, the percentage of illiteracy being as high as 32·64 in 1923. Great progress has since been made, although compulsory elementary education was not in force in all provinces until 1931. The number of primary schools increased from 877 in 1919 to 2,557 in 1936, and a law of August 1936 raised the school-leaving age to 16 years. After the Polish occupation of Vilna a new university was founded at Kaunas.

IV. CONSTITUTIONAL AND POLITICAL PROBLEMS OF THE SUCCESSION STATES

1. Introduction

At a first glance, the domestic histories of the three States since the 642
War seem to bear a striking resemblance. Each started with an ultra-democratic Constitution, and each has passed through a phase of dictatorship from which it is now, apparently, beginning to emerge. The factors contributing to these changes were not, however, by any means identical in each case, and the likeness between the three dictatorships was in some respects less real than apparent.

The early Constitutions of the new Republics, drafted after a careful study of those of France, Switzerland, and the United States, and above all of the Weimar Constitution of post-War Germany, owed their extreme democratic character partly to a natural reaction against the Tsarist régime, partly, too, to the political atmosphere prevailing in Europe after the victory of the Western democracies in the War. It was the prime concern of their authors to assert the sovereign power of the people, and to place such checks on the activities of those who governed them as to make either parliamentary or presidential 'absolutism' impossible.[1]

[1] For a detailed comparative study, see A. Headlam-Morley, *The New Democratic Constitutions of Europe* (Oxford University Press, 1928); texts of the Constitutions are printed as Appendices to M. W. Graham, *op. cit.* 113